

Abstract - Jeff Guido

Interviewee: Jeff Guido

Interviewers: Stefano Alonzi, Sean Connell, Patrick Clancy

Date: October 10, 2017

Location: History Department Office, Old Main, SUNY Cortland, Cortland, New York

Length: 47:01

Jeff Guido was born in Cortland, New York on April 25, 1968 and has lived here his whole life. His mother's grandmother emigrated here from England in the early 19th century with her older sister. Jeff's family was involved in the industrial growth of Cortland during the economic boom. His great grandmother worked within the 1890 House, which at the time was the home of the Wickwire family, who were the owners of the Wickwire factory. His grandfather was an established factory worker, who climbed in the ranks until he had almost 400 people under him. His father was born in Clinton, New York, and completed university degree at SUNY Cortland where he met Jeff's mother. His father worked as a teacher at Homer High School for many years, and his mother worked in a doctor's office in Cortland. Jeff followed the footsteps of his father and graduated from Cortland High School, and continued his post secondary degree, studying History at SUNY Oswego. He completed his Teaching certification at SUNY Cortland and now works at Cortland High School. Jeff currently lives in Cortland, New York with his wife and three daughters and is an active member in the community. Jeff explains the obvious change in demographics that Cortland has seen through the industrial boom and the evident decline in economic wealth. He highlights the factories value to the Cortland community during the early stages of industrialization and how it shaped the town. Jeff held a position on City Council for 2 terms, which allowed him to understand the issues raised by the population of Cortland. He brings awareness to the importance of the university in this small community and its value to the town of Cortland. Jeff also gives perspective on the possible negative impact of the university on the town and the people of Cortland. Throughout the interview, Jeff is able to tell personal stories that illustrate the everyday life of a Cortland resident. He touches on the evident change of Cortland over the decades, which allows the public audience to connect to the history of this town. Overall, this interview is an example of oral and public history, and can be used as a tool to discover Cortland's values which have been embedded over time. It allows an individual the opportunity to not only hear but connect to the rich history of this Cortland community, painting a picture of the past and present day.

Field Notes - Jeff Guido

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The interviewee: Jeff Guido is currently a high school history teacher for a local school in Cortland, New York. Mr. Guido has been a member of the Cortland community his whole life along with his parents, relatives and immediate family. Mr. Guido received his undergraduate degree in history at SUNY Oswego, and got his teaching requirements at SUNY Cortland. He has been an active member of the community, as he held a position in City Council for many years. He is currently focused on raising his three daughters, while maintaining his daily job at the high school. Throughout the interview he retells childhood stories and current stories, along with thoroughly explaining the Cortland demographics throughout the years.

The interviewers: Stefano Alonzi, Sean Connell and Patrick Clancy are all studying history through their undergraduate degree, attending SUNY Cortland. This interview is for one of the assignments in the His 280 Fall 2017 semester class titled "Introduction to Public History." This interview will be placed on display in the 1890 House museum, as a source of public history. This interview focuses on the life of Mr. Guido growing up in Cortland New York. This interview gives perspective on everyday life living in Cortland and highlights the town's values over the decades.

Description of the interview: The interview took place in the History department office in Old Main. This is a building on the SUNY Cortland Campus, in Cortland New York. For our Interview, the 4 of us sat at a table where we were able to converse for just over 40 minutes.

Note on Recording: the interview was recorded on an Olympus device and a back up copy was recorded on an iPhone

Transcript - Jeff Guido

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Jeff Guido: You guys have set questions you are going to ask me or?

Sean, Stefano, Pat: Just a couple, just want to pick your brain a little bit, just going to start with introducing ourselves, alright yeah so this is Patrick Clancy, Stephen Alonzo and Sean Connell

JG: Jeff Guido

SSP: Alright so we were going to start by first tell us about your childhood, Jeff, and living up in Cortland.

JG: I grew up here in Cortland, town is very different from when I grew up here, or I shouldn't say very different, the towns changed demographically, because there were still a lot of the factory jobs still in town when I was growing up, I distinctly remember like when the Brockway factory closed down, in the mid 1970's and I was maybe 8 or 9 years old seeing bumper stickers on peoples cars saying last one out of Cortland please turn out the lights cause Wickwires had shut down about 6, 7 years before the late 60s or 1970's right around that time and Wickwires factory shut down and that was huge then Brockway shut down not too long after that. You know than we lost Smith Corona that was here so it was a little bit different than what it used to be. A lot more service industry and not so much blue

collar jobs that people used to have. You know I grew up pretty middle class, my father was a teacher and my mother worked in a doctor's office, but pretty normal I guess for here.

SSP: So yeah we were told that your mom had a lot of relatives that worked in the factory?

JG: Yeah my great grandmother, my mom probably already talked about this but, my great grandmother and I believe her older sister came over. My great grandmother was 16 came over from England and her name was Jane Mann like the owl man I guess, and she worked in the 1890 House and worked for the Wickwires and she met her husband here Arthur Buggs who was also from England and it was kind of a weird thing they didn't know each other in England than they moved here and then , so then I guess my great grandmother passed away when my grandfather was only 6 or 7, and so my great grandmother raised, she had 4 children 3 boys and a girl raised all 3 or all 4 kids by herself after that which was pretty remarkable thing cause this was 1920s than the Great Depression hit and they had I guess rented a farm right behind I don't know if you guys know where the high school is , used to kind of on the edge of town than my grandmother moved them down to her house and the house is still there actually it's the families it's on Pearl Street, ya know, it backs right up onto the college with all the parking lots and all that, but that used to be the Genmen farm that whole stretch where basically from Pearl Street all the way up to 281 used to be farmland and the Genmens house was the big house right on the corner of Pearl Street and Tompkins and a lot of people park right in there when they are walking over to the pr or going over to the new building there.

And that was the farmhouse for the Genmen Farm that was there cause my grandfather always told me about how he could go over and get eggs. The Genmens kind of looked after my grandfather but my great grandmother worked at the, well she worked at the 1890 House from what the family has told me, and she also worked at Crescent Corset, which was down on South Main Street here as well and it's a big factory looking building that they are renovating right now and they are going to turn into condos or something. And so she worked there as a seamstress cause they used to make ladies undergarments and all that stuff but my great grandfather's brother George Buggs and worked at Wickwires so when my grandfather graduated from high school I guess he lied about his age. He was turning 18 in August but he graduated in June and there was a job opening in my, well it would have been my grandfather's uncle, got him a job at the factory, and I guess he started out my grandfather told me and he did a lot of the wire drawing and all that stuff I don't know if you guys are familiar with what they did at the Wickwires

SSP: A little bit yeah we were going to ask you

JG: Kind of ironic with the name

SSP: Yeah absolutely

JG: The Wickwires produced wires and it had nothing to do necessarily with

SSP: Yeah exactly

JG: With their names but well on my mom's side of the family, they are very English and my grandfather always told me stories about how down on South Main Street there was an Italian bar the Melodyland where I don't know if you guys have

ever been that far down Mainstreet and then right next door there's a bar called Ivan's' and this is way down almost to the high school all the way to the high school. And my grandfather always joked about how because he was English he could go into the Italian bar or go into the Russian bar it was Russians and Ukrainians cause the neighborhood right down in that section were Ukrainian and Russian people and then over on towards the east side you had Port Watson Street and that area of town was all the Italians because he wasn't either he could go in both. He said if you were with the Russians you didn't necessarily go hang out with the Italians next door in their bar and vice versa and all that stuff, but my grandfather told me that he eventually advanced up through the ranks and all that stuff. And he told me about how when they would have layoffs sometimes and he would trap muskrats to make ends meet and all kinds of stuff like that. Yeah he said there were a few times he said where they had economic slowdowns where they would just cut back on the hours instead of laying people off they would just cut back their hours and things like that but by the time it was all said and done where my grandfather retired and Wickwire shut down he was in charge of like 5 600 people so he was able to advance on up through. And during world war 2 because my grandfather had an older brother and a younger brother and because Wickwires was considered a vital wartime industry, but he didn't get drafted both his brothers did, but he stayed because he was working and they made ball bearings and all kinds of stuff that was real important there

SSP: So would you say that Cortland was an industrial area.

JG: Oh sure.

SSP: And that immigrants would come over?

I always heard stories, I don't know if they were to confirm them, but about how they would send recruiters down the New York City area and the docks for when people would be coming in and off the boat. And because they did have very distinct ethnic neighborhoods in Cortland for a while over in Pudgy's and St Mary's that was like the Irish section and you had the Ukrainians and Russians and a lot of Italians if you were Italian you went to the Italian church if you were Irish you went to the Irish church and stuff like that. But definitely, it's kind of hard to believe that at one point there were probably 10 to 12 thousand factory jobs here in Cortland cause Wickwires had 3 or 4 thousand people, Smith Corona was 3 or 4 thousand Brewer Kitchener's which was they did things like forging. They had 500 people Brockway had 5 600 people, so yeah it was a very blue collar town. Some of the old timers or people I know that have been around for a while about how on down on South Main Street if the wind was blowing just right you didn't want your car parked out or you didn't want your laundry out at certain times because the factory smoke and all the stuff probably burned a lot of coal. Yeah and all that stuff, but there is a picture roll. Well I saw that picture it's in the basement of the 1890 House and it's the factory and you would never know there was a factory that went all the way we'll both sides of South Main Street all the way over to Pendleton Street and they had their own little railroad spur that came through. They actually had a tunnel that came under South Main Street so they had like an electric forklift or something that went underneath the road so they wouldn't have to block traffic on South Main when it was quite busy, they had a huge fire, well before my time, I was probably 2 or 3

years old, when the big section of Brockway burned down, you know they said it lit up. 2005 was when the last big Brockway, excuse me the Wickwire building down on South Main Street burned and they were actually getting ready to tear it down and it was set vacant for 30, 35 years, 40 years whatever it was, and they were getting ready to salvage the bricks, and I guess the wood, I never realized the inside of it was all wood. They did not use steel beams it was all wood. And it was like old grown forest stuff, and it was a lot they were going to salvage so the people who lived behind it the guy said they were going to tear down the Wickwire building and we are going to tear down that house and they got angry and one guy went in there and poured Kerosene because they had a heater in there for the workers poured Kerosene in there and the whole place went up. And I lived over on Pearl Street at the time and mother in law lived down on the other end of town down near the Wickwires and she called me up and was like, "something big is on fire down near my house". And I could see flames from my house not just the glow like actual flames that's how big it was. So when they had the big fire back in the early 1970's, I remember my grandfather telling me this that they actually called him up because the firefighters wanted to know where certain things were because they used to keep. Well they had all sorts of solvents and stuff they used to use down there when my grandfather told me this one time. Because they were always dealing with wire and you had to put the grease on the wire to get it to drawn it through to keep it from rusting, but then you had to use degreasers like trichloroethane and stuff like that, so they had a big pond and this was back before you had environmental rules and regulations and all that used up degreaser would just go into this pond and ooze

into the creek that runs down in there and run down into the river. So we have that going for us.

SSP: Tell us more about as a child growing up in Cortland and how it's changed since then and how you have seen it through your perspective how it's changed.

JG: I remember growing up I lived over near Suggett Park and I went to Parker School which was right around the corner, and our door, the only time our door was ever locked was when everyone was home at night. You know when you go to bed you lock the back door you know my parents never locked the backdoor on the house. And I sound really old saying this but now I wouldn't dream of leaving the house open and you know and you were never afraid of walking down the streets at night, not that I am now but it's just changed, you see a lot of them, you see a lot of them, you didn't have the drug issue, or well not that I was aware of and stuff like weed or something like that, but you didn't have the people cooking meth right next door to you. Right on the corner from where I grew up, right on the street of Parker's School they had a fire because someone was cooking meth there and on both sides so on Madison Street and Maple Ave they have had meth busts and where I live now just down the street one of the Red Dragon and but the trailer park just up the road, a few years ago they were having meth busts there once a month. So that's the part that's really different, like I said, when I was growing up it seemed like everyone's parents, it seemed like everyone had jobs than it seemed to change by the time of the late 1980s early 1990's that a lot of those jobs were starting to disappear and that's kind of different. I'm a lifer there I went there now I teach

there, and the number of students there that are assisted that get the free reduced lunch and all that stuff, it's gone through the roof. The community has changed in that respect like a lot of people on public assistance, and its just kind of sad to see, that but you know, there have been some nice things that have gone on as well as they are trying to revitalize some stuff.

SSP: Would you say the whole drug problem is that something recent or has that been a problem for a while now

JG: With the meth it's been last 6 7 years i can imagine you know you always hear about people you know buying and selling weed and all that stuff you never hear about the hard stuff not around here but with Cortland being where it is in relation to Syracuse Binghamton and Ithaca and its a 3 hour trip to new York city you get a lot of pass through stuff so you know that was a problem for a while especially back in the early 90's when everyone was doing crack and the different bigger cities they come to Cortland sometimes to meet and the policemen would talk about it cause you used to see in the newspaper all the time people would be getting arrested and so and so from the Bronx or so and so from Staten island or so and so from northern new jersey and all that stuff so that was kind of different from what you would see and that's the scary part but i guess that's kind of an epidemic everywhere with the heroin or the opioids and that's not just unique to Cortland

SSP: So education you said you went to elementary school here in Cortland and high school as well and then you said Oswego, so why did you choose Oswego

JG: I guess i just wanted to get out of town a little bit, and i got accepted there

SSP: You studied history there?

Yes I was a history major there then I came back, I wasn't very smart as far as choosing a major right off the bat and I chose a history major because they said you got to choose one by the time you're a junior so I did and my father said what are you going to do with it and I said I don't know he said what do you think about teaching and I said sure so if I were to stay at Oswego I would have to have gone another two semesters probably 3 because I haven't done any of the education requirements and SUNY Cortland at that time offered the professional semester with Dr. Cypher and he since passed away so I came and interviewed with him and I got in their program and it was great we did like 6 7 weeks everyday it was like 6 hours a day 5 days a week and we did all the theory and all that stuff than we did a 6 7 week student teaching placement and then we did a 2 3 week follow up session at the end and we were done in December and we were done and I took the NTE and you guys are going to be teachers ?

SSP: I'm in the same boat you're in, I'm a history major same here same here

JG: What am I going to be a museum curator or something like that so but my father was a history teacher he taught at Homer for many years so it's been good I didn't mean to stay here my whole life I just happen to have gotten hired at Cortland and go here in high school so I'm a lifer yeah I've been here a while

SSP: You think you could tell us more about your parents, just kind of like anything about them growing up?

JG: Yeah well my mom was from Cortland and her side of the family that worked Wickwires and all over town here and my father was actually born out in Clinton New York and you see my last name was spelled and you'd think it was

Guido when my great grandparents they said Guido but when my grandfather and his brother my grandfather became a doctor so in order not to sound so ethnic changed the pronunciation to Guido oh yeah and the funniest part was i never heard it be used as a derogatory manner until i went to Oswego and i met some people from down state and they like to throw around the f bomb in front of it like f-ing Guido and I'm like ahh so I said to somebody sometime like what's your last name and they were like smith or something and I'm like well there goes an f'ing smith girl looked at me and was like what's your problem and I'm like Guido is my last name and she's like you don't look like one cause before jersey shore you still had the guy with the wife beater and the gold chain and the horn and my name wasn't Vinnie or something like that like tony or Geno so my name is Jeff you know very English so yeah my father his father my grandfather passed away when my dad was like 14 so my father moved to Binghamton new York and he did 2 years in what they called harper college and now it's called Broome community college and my father moved up here to finish his 4 year degree and all that stuff and that's where he and my mom met and that's how i ended up here and my father went to homer high school and that's where they met, that's why I'm still here i guess i was the whole thing.

SSP: When you're teaching with your students, when you engage with your students do you feel they're happy to be in Cortland? Do you think they want to stay in Cortland, they see a future here?

JG: It's a very weird dynamic because some of my students are affluent. Some of them are sons and daughters of professionals and college professors. Many of them get through high school as a means to an end and move on to bigger and better

things. I have many students who are generational poverty and some of them I know would drop out before they changed the education requirements saying you had to stay. It used to be on your 16th birthday you could sign out, hey, I quit. Now you have to at least finish out the school year. I have many students that their only reason they're in school, the attendance actually goes up a little bit in the winter time because it's warm, they've got a place to go, they've got a place to eat, and they can be warm for a few hours. So yea definitely some of the students, can't wait, I'm out of here. There's other students, this is it that they were born here and they might be on public assistance for the rest of their lives. The programs that they have here have been very good, I have several students that could care less about American History but can swing a hammer and saw some 2x4's and all that stuff and they're happy. So the Boces program helps get their high school requirements out of the way so they can go out and be successful doing that, nothing wrong with that. I've got students, a couple of them that went to college a year or two and said, no that's not for me and have gone into the trades. They've become carpenters and plumbers, and they're making more money than I am. A student of mine became an electrician and he's already pulling down more money than I am, after how many years with a masters, but god bless him he can do that it's great.

SSP: So do you think your school is properly funded with students with these types of situations?

JG: I guess that's kind of a tricky situation, a lot of it has to do with the state because they cut back on funding and I think we're always underfunded. The program that they're running has to do with the state funding and there's been all

sorts of lawsuits against the governor's office because of revenue sharing. Cortland I know budgetary wise they've had to dip into the reserves for several years now and they're getting dangerously low, we're a school that's on fiscal bad terms and that's always a worry. The other thing a lot of people don't realize is that, I forget what the percentage is I'm not going to get it right but the amount of property in the city of Cortland that's not taxed, because you've got the college, which is fantastic but all the property the college owns is not taxed by the city of Cortland because it's a public entity. All the churches, all the elementary schools, all the parks. So you have somewhere, I believe it's a larger percentage of properties that aren't taxed than are taxed in the city of Cortland. So maybe you have 45 percent of the properties paying 100 percent of the school taxes, so that's a tough thing with this community and with job prospects. When you drive around town, this is another thing going back to my childhood, how many houses do you see around town that have the red square with the X through it, meaning it's not occupied. There used to be one or two houses around town, but you can drive down practically any street now and see house with it. Go up Groton Ave, there's three or four of them. So in that perspective the towns different. I used to be on the city council and right as I was leaving, this was about 2005, the city passed an ordinance to go after the people who quit paying their taxes and sell their houses because they were trying to get back some of this money back on the tax roll, because not only was it the school taxes but it was the property taxes for the city of Cortland too.

SSP: Going back to your grandfather, did he have any stories of injuries happening at the Wickwire factory?

JG: His Uncle George, the one who got him a job there, he worked the big crane that picked up the debris and scrap metal and put it in a huge container to be heated up. So my grandfather told me, that his uncle told him that he saw a few people fall in and they were just gone. I've only ever heard this anecdotally about how someone got hurt on the job and they would take them home so he would pass away there. I guess a lot of it is with perspectives, my grandparents, I wouldn't call them rich but they were comfortable middle class. They had a house in Cortland and then they bought property on Song Lake and built a house up there, before they became snowbirds and moved to Florida. My grandfather never told me that he was hurt directly, but working in one of those steel mills, I've seen pictures of some of the old machines and they had pulleys and wires and chains and stuff going around so I imagine people got their arms yanked off and got all kinds of mangled up. I can't imagine complaining about having to grade papers, I'm not coughing up a lung from working in a factory all day.

SSP: We visited a couple of the war monuments in the park and you mentioned that your uncles fought in the war?

JG: Yea two of my Uncles did. My Uncle George, that was my grandfather's older brother, both he and my uncle Ken, who was my grandfather's younger brother were drafted into World War II. My uncle Ken who just passed away who was 94, was in charge of the motor pool, so like jeeps and stuff. In fact he ran Kellogg auto and Napa auto supply when he got back home. He was in the same area during the battle of the bulge and he was looking for his brother and he said he and one of his other buddies got drunk and didn't know the right password and they got

detained because that's when they had the German infiltrators that were coming back through. My uncle George's wife, my Aunt Joyce followed him when he first got drafted out to the state of Washington and she got a job in a factory out there riveting wing sections to P-38 lightnings or something like that, the fighter planes. So she was Rosie the riveter, my aunt Joyce could tell some stories. My grandfather stayed here the whole time during the war. My uncle George, he came back and worked at Smith & Corona over on Groton for the longest time. I'm not sure if you guys are familiar with Corona, they used to make typewriters. Cortland used to be the typewriter capital of the world, they were huge for a long time, go right out across from Applebee's, that was Smith & Corona out there. My grandfather was always telling me, the bowling alley, 281, across from A&W, they used to be opened all the time because Corona would run three shifts. You worked 11-7 in the morning and you'd go down to the bowling alley, have a hamburger and a beer there and cash your check there. There used to be 4 bars on south main street, they'd be open all the time because people would get off a big shift or something and have a beer.

SSP: What's important to you about the city of Cortland?

JG: Well two out of three of my brothers are still here with their families and my mom still lives here and it's funny I live across the road from a guy who I've known since kindergarten. I joke about being a townie and all that stuff, but I've got friends and family here and I guess I'm comfortable. I do kind of worry, I have three kids and what their job prospects will be, there certainly won't be any factory here, nothing wrong with ever working in a factory, just good paying jobs, they're going to be hard to find to be able to stay around here.

SSP: I see a lot of the old buildings in town with the complex architecture and that the town was booming, when do you think that prosperous time was and when it started to decline?

JG: It's all perspective in regards to some of the large Victorian houses in town. There were one or two I knew single families owned, but since the 50 years I've been around here they've all been turned into apartments. In that respect those changed before I was around. A lot of the housing around town, you started to change, some of the neighborhood changed a little bit, not necessarily in a bad way, with a lot of college housing moving in. Having a bunch of college kids living next to a family doesn't always work out too well in regards to the hours that they keep up. It's been in the last 5 or 10 years that we've seen a real decline in the housing in town like I said with the red X's. We never had that when I was growing up. You used to have several of the big houses over off Thompkins. There used to be a beautiful mansion there. It was a frat house, probably Delta or Kappa that was in there and that was probably 15,16 years ago. The one fraternity got kicked off campus and another fraternity moved in and the other fraternity vowed to burn their house down and they did. It was beautiful, I had seen pictures of what it looked like as a one family house, it had a ballroom and all that stuff. But they were all fraternities or sororities or apartments I never knew of a single family living in them.

SSP: Would you say the town benefits more now from the college being here?

JG: Yea I definitely think it benefits from the college. It's a real mix, I lived for eleven years right on the dead end of Pearl Street right behind where they built the

new student life center is, and if I thought the college was a problem I wouldn't have moved over there. The only time we ever had any issues was in the summer time with the summer camps with the counselors. People used to party and you could tell it would be like 1 or 2 am and you know all the bars would just close because I would hear all the camp counselors walk by. You know it's night time in the summer and drunk people don't realize how loud they are. But I definitely think the town benefits from the college students. I used to hear it from both sides when I was on the city council. People always wanted noise ordinances and fines and things. You'd get People coming in, especially landlords saying college kids bring a lot of money into the town, my reply was yea they do and I would always say this, I guarantee I spend more money in town than a college student was and if I was having 100 people on my front lawn and someone pissing in the bushes and puking on your car I would hope I'd get arrested or ticketed or something like that. Definitely the town benefits having the college here. It's kind of interesting because I've had a lot of student teachers from SUNY Cortland and there's a few of them that are still around town, you like to see people from other areas of the state or from out of state that say "hey I'll settle here" and there's been a few. They definitely bring some life into the town, not to say it's a ghost town because if you go down on main street during the summer there's usually something always going on. They usually have live music and a lot of people out on the streets. I know the college neighborhoods get a little quieter. But yea definitely the college is a benefit to the community with the resources and I wish we had closer ties as a community. You get it on both sides with the college because like I joke a couple times "oh he's a townie", but I was both

and I just wish in a lot of cases we had closer community ties. I love going to watch a football game, lacrosse game, baseball game.

SSP: No hockey?

JG: I've never gotten into hockey; do you play here?

SSP: Yea so if you ever want to stop by we're always taking fans

JG: A buddy of mine used to coach for several years and the other guy, Howey Thomas who I grew up with works here in town. But yea I just wish we had closer ties. Because you always get the us versus them going both ways. I know the first few Fridays in the fall and the first nice weather in the spring, you go to Clinton Ave and all the garbage and all that stuff. I could take you down some of the streets that there hasn't ever been a college student and see the same thing and it's not a Saturday or Sunday morning, it's a Tuesday afternoon. It kind of goes both ways.

SSP: Could you tell us more about being on the city council and how you got into that and how that was?

JG: I got into that because I was complaining one time to somebody that something wasn't getting done, the garbage wasn't picked up, the streets weren't plowed. Next thing you know someone was knocking on my door saying "hey you got a big mouth do you want to run for city council.". So I did two terms in the fortworth, it actually covers quite a bit of the college which was, well you probably got to edit this part out, it was great because they wouldn't let you campaign on campus and it goes by population so I didn't have to walk around big neighborhoods like some of the other city council members. Politics, it can be a strange thing. It can get your blood pressure going sometimes. I enjoyed like, when somebody would call

up and say “hey we don’t have a stop sign at the end of our street” so I would call public safety. I remember there was this elderly lady who called me up and she was like “I would like my tree taken down.” I said okay is it in the cities right of way between the curb and the sidewalk? She said I don’t know what that means? I said is it in between the curb and the sidewalk? She said it’s to the left of the sidewalk. I said well lady if I’m facing one direction, it’s towards your house, if I’m facing a different direction it’s away from the house. You get stuff like that but for the most part the biggest issues we had were dealing with college occupancy was one of the big ones. This was 13,14 years ago and the city was trying to get ordinances because this is when you were starting to see, well it probably started in the 80’s but I wasn’t paying attention. You would have someone come in and buy a house and it’s like a 3 person house and they would try to put 9 people in it to live for the semester. It used to be I’ve got a young family here, a young family here then somebody bought this house and they’re not a local landlord, or they could have been a local landlord trying to cram 8,9,10 people in there and people would be parking on the lawns. So that was always some of the issues I dealt with. Other than that a lot of it was boring. Dealing with budgets and all that stuff.

SSP: Do you think this project will benefit Cortland? Get Cortland’s history out to the public?

JG: Yea I would like to think so and it’s interesting now because I ask my students, how many of you knew 3000 people used to have jobs just down the hill, a stone throw from my classroom, if the trees were cut down you’d be able to see the whole factory. Most of them have no idea. You say Smith Corona, most of them have

no idea. You're going to have a lot of old timers that know the history but I think most people don't, and what a rich history Cortland really has. We had a few famous people here Elton B. Parker, I don't know if you ever heard of him, he ran against Teddy Roosevelt but lost. Ronnie Dio, he was in Black Sabbath, I went to high school with his son, graduated with his son. Ronnie Dio graduated with my mom. Yea I've met him a few times, great guy, really down to earth I'm still friends with his son. There used to be a few other famous musicians. There used to be an old jazz guy, Speble Willcocks. You ask the music people up here they'd know him. Yea I think this is great someone is taking this on. I like the idea my family connection with the Wickwire, have you guys been down to the house, toured that and stuff, and the alumni house next door? I guess that was one of the Wickwires, I think one of the sororities is down there.

SSP: Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about?

JG: No nothing I can think of but thanks for indulging me for a bit and I hope this helps you guys.